

Regional transit facility holds great promise

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FOR the last four decades (40 years) we do not have any inter-regional transit facility just because some neighbouring countries including Bangladesh have been remaining anti-Indian. Neither it is any good for the Asian and the SAARC countries, nor is it doing any benefit to the growing and promising nation of Bangladesh. Let us forget about other countries and the benefit they are driving from regional trade. Bangladesh has not been able to reap the benefit of regional trade for about the 40 years since its independence. Is it expected of us in Bangladesh? Not at all. Nor it is acceptable to any other country in Asia including India in particular. Precisely speaking, we must do it by creating the transit facilities between neighbouring countries, SAARC countries, and the countries of the Middle-Eastern and the near by countries in Asian context including China and Myanmar.

Regional trade and its benefit will go to both India and Bangladesh and all countries related to the opportunity of regional trade and business and the transit communication. Bangladesh could have bought goods and services at a very low price from its neighbouring countries, where they are produced very cheap due to their advantage of local and indigenous technology. Other countries neighbouring to Bangladesh can benefit from regional transit, corridor and regional trade and business by buying goods and services of Bangladesh including ship-building, apparels, garments, electronics, agricultural machinery and equipment and the related spare parts, pharmaceuticals, silk products, weaving products, jamdani, frozen fish, hilsha-fish, lobster, crab, snakes etc. People in Bangladesh can buy sharee, three-piece, spices, dal, chal, onion, garlic, red chilli, and so many other things of daily life very cheap from the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh including Nepal, Bhutan, India and China. All this means that transit and trade-and-business can benefit the neighbouring countries, including ourselves in Bangladesh and all the people related to this transit opportunities. These benefits of significance in nature are better than anything of insignificant benefit. In short, we are preferring

significant to insignificant benefit from inter-regional trade through the proposed transit facilities.

To some economists this transit facility can introduce a variety of insecurity for Bangladesh the nature of which is not known to anybody. This may be called an irrational fear. I agree with the opinion of those who say that a simple and unknown fear cannot stop our driving force to reach and reap the fruits of economic growth. I believe, economists should express their views in terms of their economic knowl-

come the golden opportunity of having transit facilities promoting between regional countries. Even after the long 40 years of independence, transit as a late opportunity is better than never.

The transit issues are manifold and may be described below:

- (a) 1. Bhutan-India-North Bengal (Bangladesh)-Mongla Sea Port.
2. Nepal-India-North Bengal (Bangladesh)-Mongla Sea Port.
3. Benapol (Bangladesh)-Mongla Sea Port-Dhaka-Chittagong.



edge and economic concept and not in any other term. Let us put the burden of understanding the issue of security on the shoulder of security forces of Bangladesh including DGFI, NSI, BGB, Coastal Guard and the forces posted in the check post, airport, seaport etc. As economists, security is not our job to think about. We will think about the benefit of international business only through the regional transit facilities. This is an acceptable philosophy of economists, businessmen, people, the general people and human beings. Transit facilities and international business are also politically acceptable worldwide including SAARC countries. Therefore, instead of entertaining any imaginary fear let us wel-

Bangladesh.

2. Construction of development of deep water sea port of Chittagong in Bangladesh.

The cost of developing all those transit possibilities as mentioned under (a) 1-7 and the deep water sea port of Mongla and Chittagong as mentioned (b) 1-2 under may roughly be assumed to be estimated at Tk. 100 thousand crores or USD\$ 10 thousand million or 10 billion. Who will bear all these huge expenses? How those cost of construction of transit route and their maintenance will be distributed among the beneficiary countries? Which are the beneficiary countries? Who will take initiative to form a consortium of meeting and discussion or will play a role of decision making in the meeting? Who would be lobbying with the regional countries to implement this generous world development project?

The countries in the SAARC region including Bangladesh, Middle-Eastern countries and the giant country China and Myanmar will be the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the above-mentioned inter-regional transit facility, and the development of a couple of deep water sea-port of Mongla and Chittagong. A consortium of the above mentioned countries can be formed to share the cost and benefit of the aforesaid interregional transit and the couple of deep water seaport in Bangladesh.

Which country will provide the leadership in performing the consortium activities in these noble jobs of world development? What would be the mode of distribution of cost between the member countries of the transit consortium? A thumb-rule can be the population proportion in each beneficiary country as mentioned above. Or the cost may accordingly be shared by all those countries as mentioned above in proportion to their population. Who is going to provide the leadership in this consortium of interregional transit facilities? Or who will bell the cat? A consortium of a few countries would be better than a consortium of too many countries. However, all of the associated countries can be the members of this essential interregional transit consortium. It would be good enough to give the initial responsibilities of taking initiative in the hand of three countries namely, (i) Bangladesh (ii) China and (iii) India to develop the whole world further.

Mayanmar-China.

4. Banglar-Bandha (Bangladesh)-Mongla Sea Port-Dhaka-Chittagong-Mayanmar-China.

5. Dhaka-Tangail-Bogra-North Bengal-Banglar-Bandha-Shiliguri-China.

6. Banglar-Bandha (Bangladesh)-Bogra-Tangail-Dhaka-Sylhet-Tamabil-Mayanmar-China.

7. Banglar-Bandha-Bogra-Tangail-Dhaka-Tamabil (Sylhet)-Mayanmar-China.

(b) Development of sea-port in Bangladesh.

1. Construction of development of deep water sea port of Mongla in

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